



## There's Music In the Air

Spring has sprung and there's music in the air.

This issue brings lots of good stuff. Our feature artist is the one and only Spats White. If you have never heard of Spats, you won't want to miss this issue's artist spotlight. With over fifty years in the entertainment industry, Spats has rubbed elbows with lots of famous performers from the past.

This issue also features a review of the Vintage re-issue Oscar Schmidt OU250SWK "Bell" ukulele. The original "Bell" uke was produced by Lyon & Healy in the 1920s. It was a popular model, but, few of the originals have survived. Oscar Schmidt faithfully reproduced this instrument in a solid wood model that will warm your heart when you hear it.

Ukulele popularity shows no signs of diminishing at this point. All major guitar brands have released models of their own and it's a buyer's market. We are seeing lots of new products from Martin, Fender, Ibanez, Alvarez, Dean, Gretsch, Recording King, Mitchell, Takamine, Luna, Cordoba,

Washburn (with a Koa ukulele under their own brand, not the Oscar Schmidt label).

Since we are focused on vintage ukuleles, Ohana Music's timing is superb. Thanks to Louis and Steph from Ohana for the chance to review their newest SK-39 prototype Martin #3 copy. Check out the review. If you love vintage ukes and reproductions, this is a MUST have. We will also be posting a video on YouTube.

People have been anxiously awaiting the end of the ukulele craze and there seems to be no lack of momentum at least for now. In fact, new brands, like Diamondhead have come onto the scene offering decent playable ukuleles in the \$60 range. There are more choices than ever. So, it is more important than ever that the buyer checks professional reviews before spending their hard-earned money on something that just might not be worth their investment.

Most of the guitar companies are producing pretty instruments that just don't produce the kind of sound that players have

come to enjoy over the last several years.

We have some interesting ukuleles coming over the next few issues. Hopefully, our reviews will help you find the uke you've always wanted.

In the way of sad news, we lost one of the truly great players of our time just recently, Lyle Ritz is gone, but not forgotten. Read about Lyle in this issue.

Keep your eyes and ears open. This is ukulele festival season. We'll share news and information as word comes our way, so, stay tuned.

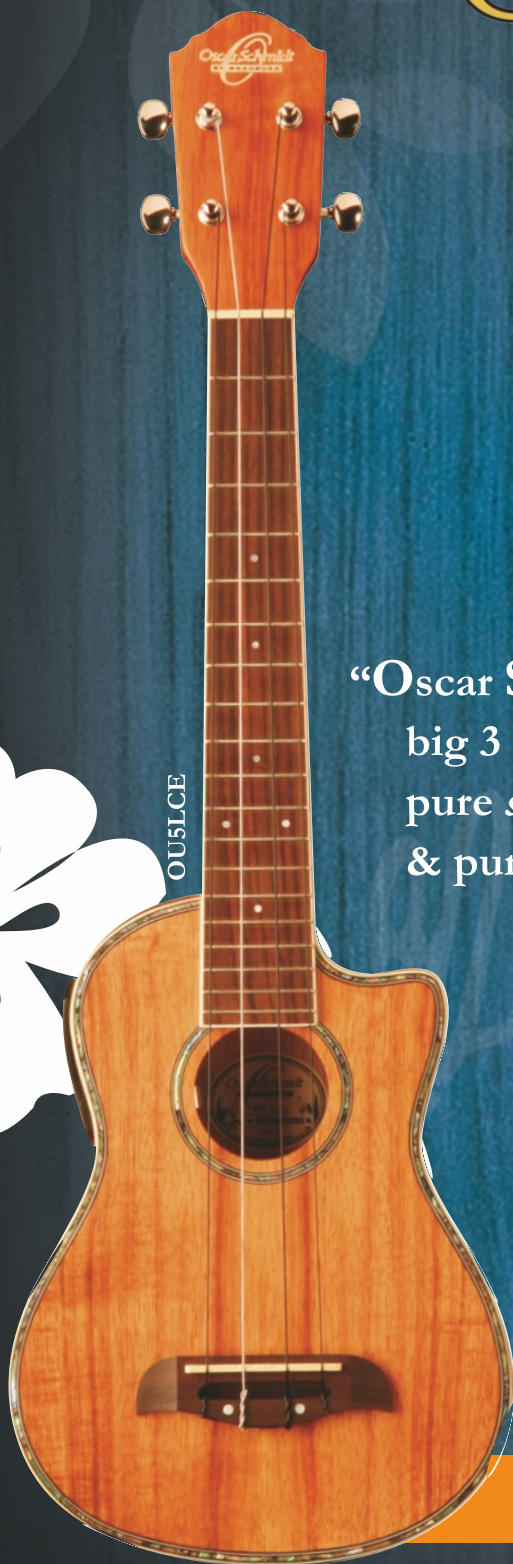
There's music in the air.

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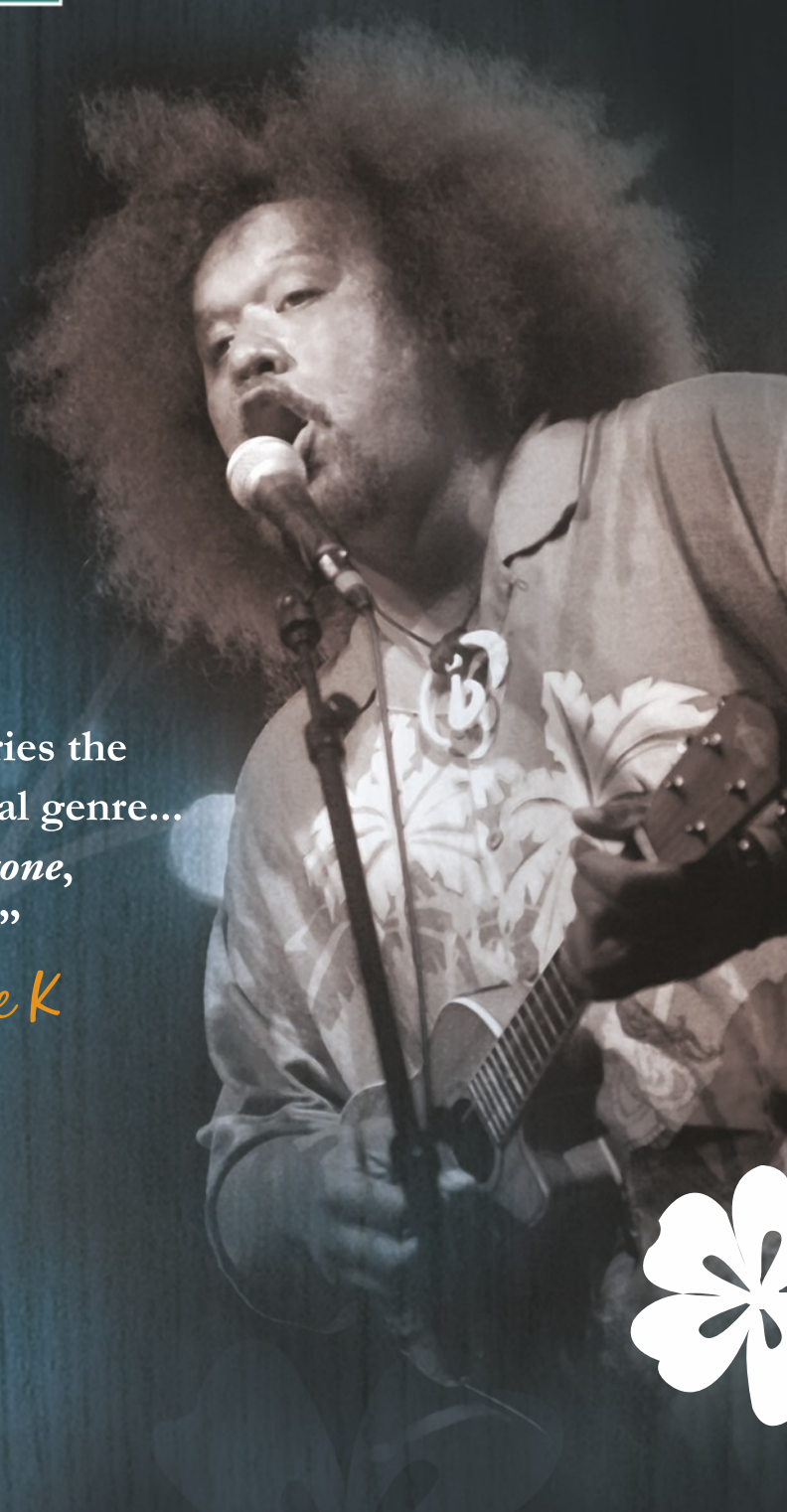
# Oscar Schmidt

BY WASHBURN



“Oscar Schmidt carries the  
big 3 in my musical genre...  
pure *sound*, pure *tone*,  
& pure *Hawaiian!*”

— Willie K



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## Oscar Schmidt OU250SWK

I have to admit that there are some ukuleles that just interest me because of the shape or simply for cosmetic reasons. Perhaps that is why the Oscar Schmidt "Bell" has always caught my eye.

The "Bell" is a vintage re-issue of the old Lyon & Healy Bell from the 1920s when ukulele love swept America.

I took the pictures on the right with the Oscar Schmidt Bell, the OU250SWK on a vintage chair that sits in my living room. I thought it was an appropriate canvas for a vintage re-issue.

In my opinion, this is one of Oscar Schmidt's best instruments. The Bell is a solid wood instrument with a thin soundboard, real abalone inlay, cream colored binding, Grover tuners, and beautiful craftsmanship. All around, it's a pretty instrument that sounds sweet and mellow.

I pulled the Bell from its case and looked it over carefully before I played a note. The fit and finish were perfect. The frets are superbly dressed and there are no sharp edges anywhere. The inlays on the neck are properly seated and every seam is smooth. Even the wood

grain is perfectly straight. A lot of care went into the manufacture of this ukulele.

Tom Ferrone of Oscar Schmidt and I have discussed that long before other manufacturers came into the ukulele business, Oscar Schmidt, alone, was producing ukuleles. At that time, it seems that the only instruments that were being produced were for the budget market. You could say that aside from Hawaiian makers, like Kamaka and KoAloha, the only instruments being produced were budget laminated ukes that were durable, but did not perform well.

Oscar Schmidt soon began producing solid wood instruments like the OU280SWK in Hawaiian Koa, the OU220SWK in quarter-sawn mahogany, and the OU250SWK "Bell" in solid Trembesi (the so-called "rain tree"). The tree has a very dense canopy and provides thick shade for Indonesian farmers. The tree can reach eighty feet in the air (average height is about fifty feet) and the canopy is wider than the tree is tall. It is more important for the shade it provides than the cultivation of its timber. However, the wood has a very pronounced grain

and is beautiful for making musical instruments and furniture. I admit, it is one of the reasons I am attracted to this ukulele— it's just beautiful.

The Bell is solid wood construction all around. It features ivory cellulose binding, abalone logo, rosette, and dot inlays in the neck. The finish is a luxurious satin luster. The instrument is fitted with Grover



GH305 tuners that make tuning the instrument a snap. They have black buttons which suit this instrument well.

Oscar Schmidt provides you with a custom-made hard shell case to protect the Bell and it's a good thing. With a body shape that is non-standard, it would be hard to find anything that fits this ukulele well enough to provide the kind of protection I want for it. A gig bag would not provide the kind of protection that a solid wood instrument deserves (see the picture below).

One thing I really like about the hard shell case is that it has a big enough compartment for me to carry a Korg tuner with me when I take it somewhere. I

prefer a tuner that does not clamp on the headstock of my ukuleles and guitars. I guess that is the photographer in me, but, pictures of beautiful instrument are tainted by tuners clamped on their headstock as far as I am concerned. Why clamp some cheap plastic tuner on the headstock of a beautifully made instrument and leave it there while you play? I'll stick with my Korg tuners.

Speaking of headstocks, I love the shape of the OU250SWK Bell ukulele headstock. It is an elegant design that is unique—there is no other instrument like it on today's current market.

So, how does the OU250SWK Bell sound? The first word that comes to mind is sweet. It is

very sweet. It has plenty of volume, but, it is tempered well. The tone is mellow and smooth, but, audible. I have said for a long time that loud is not necessarily a mark of quality. Dull is typically a sign that an instrument is over-braced and lifeless. The perfect instrument would be smooth with good volume, but it is not too harsh. The OU250SWK Bell delivers in that respect.

If you want a truly beautiful ukulele that sounds good and has reasonable volume, a mellow tone that is perfect for strumming on the back porch while you watch the sun go down, this is it.

Oscar Schmidt, ya done well. The OU250SWK Bell is a keeper.







## Ohana SK-39

A few days ago I received a package from Ohana Music. It was the new Ohana SK-39 prototype ukulele.

The SK-39 is inspired by the Martin #3 vintage ukes that are getting harder to find these days.

If you want to produce an instrument with available raw materials and modern manufacturing techniques while capturing the look and feel of an original classic, don't bother, Ohana has already done it.

Picking up the SK-39 and tuning it, I was amazed at how well this instrument captures the look and feel of the original. The soundboard is very thin and lively—like the Martin. It is lightweight and feels so close to the original that I was blown away by it. Most modern "copies" of vintage Martin ukes weigh almost twice what the Martin ukes weigh, but not the SK-39—featherweight is a good description.

What really blew me away was the volume. With Nylgut strings, this instrument is really loud. If it were in my stable, the first thing I would do is put Martin fluorocarbon strings on it just to take the volume down a few

notches. Wow, this little uke is LOUD. What is incredible about it is that the tone is still sweet. Played hard, it is crisp and clear. It doesn't turn to mud. You can credit the light internal bracing and thin soundboard for that.

Looking over the instrument, I found that the fit and finish were excellent. Ohana has not used a lot of filler in the finish, so, don't expect the glossy sheen of the SK-35 on this uke. That would destroy the vintage look that Louis Wu was looking for in this instrument.

[Louis is the owner and driving force behind Ohana Music]

Louis once told me that Ohana strives for sonic quality above all else. In other words, Ohana's goal when designing or bringing a new ukulele to market is the sound it produces.

I have called what Ohana has accomplished "sonic excellence" and the SK-39 is a fine example of that.

The SK-39 features solid mahogany construction. The neck is solid mahogany and so is the headstock. There is a striped binding around the body and a striped rosette. A striped



inlay runs the length of the neck from the tip of the fretboard to the nut.

Speaking of the nut, it is made of bone and so is the saddle.

The bridge is of the classic Martin-style and is neatly slotted for easy string changes.

Gotoh friction tuners do a pretty fair job keeping the instrument in tune. On this instrument, I'd gladly pay for planetary geared tuners and I think that most people would. I'd love to see Ohana offer them (hint, hint).

This instrument is a pleasure to play. It is so light, and so delicate. The intonation is excellent all the way up the neck. The concert-sized model would be easier to play high up on the neck because there is a little more space between the frets. We will feature the concert model in a future issue.

I don't have an official launch

date at this point, but, I have a feeling that these will be available pretty soon. It is obvious that this prototype is ready to take to mass production. Everything is perfect and the instrument is ready to

go. I am really impressed with the over-all fit and finish, the construction and how Ohana has captured the feel of the original.

It is hard to reproduce a classic

instrument and replicate the sonic qualities while working with modern machinery and available tone woods, but, Ohana has done it. The SK-39 is a winner and is sure to delight players the world over.







## Spats White

If you have never heard of multi-talented Spats White it is my hope that you will not only know who he is by the time you have finished reading this artist spotlight, but, you'll be eager to visit [spatswhite.com](http://spatswhite.com) and download his music, watch his videos, and be inspired.

For over fifty years Spats White has been entertaining audiences with music, comedy, and heart-warming anecdotes. He started his career singing old Al Jolson and Stephen Foster tunes in black-face. Minstrel singing was not considered racially provocative back then, it was looked upon as part of entertainment history and gave homage to black Americans in the south whose soul-filled spiritual songs inspired a generation of Americans regardless of skin color. Modern minstrel shows no longer have performers in "black face" out of respect for African Americans.

As a young man, Spats wrote comedy for Groucho Marx. He attended college upstate New York where he studied screenwriting. From there, he worked his way into production working for TV stations in New York City. He produced television shows with some of

the biggest names in show business.

Later, Spats returned to his musical career and started performing around New York singing old tunes from the 19th and early 20th centuries.

Playing old Vaudeville numbers, known today as "Tin Pan Alley" tunes and playing ukulele, Spats has been billed as one of New York City's best entertainers.

Part crooner, part actor, part story-teller, Spats White has a gift for working the audience. He will charm you, make you laugh, and bring you to tears all in one show.

I wanted to introduce Spats to the global audience of ukulele players and enthusiasts by spotlighting him in this issue. So, sit back and enjoy this interview.

There are lots of pictures of Spats with some of the people with whom he has worked over the years. You may have heard of some of these people, maybe not. A lot depends on how old you are, but, trust me when I say that Spats has worked with some of the biggest names in show business in his long and fascinating career.

With that, let me introduce the bard of New York City, the consummate entertainer, the ever-talented Spats White:

**Q.** Your web site says that for "nearly thirty years" you have been entertaining audiences with your interpretations of 19th and 20th century tunes and stories; however, you have been in the entertainment industry far longer than that. When did you first decide that you wanted to be an entertainer?

**A.** I was a very small boy. It was really weird but when I was about seven years old, I not only decided I wanted to be an actor and entertainer but also became addicted to old show business and started collecting 78 rpm records, old movie stills, sheet music and vintage 8mm and 16mm movies. Anything elderly and nostalgic, you know. Growing up in a household where I was an adopted child, it was very strange having parents that had no interest in show business at all and here I was singing, doing impressions, "blacking up" as Al Jolson in my room, and absorbing old songs and movies all the time. My poor parents thought it was a little weird, but they were kind enough to enroll me, at my begging, at NYC's American Academy of Dramatic Arts when I was eight years old in 1960 and I was off to the races doing a lot of stage work, summer stock, live radio and television and anything else I could find to do. I studied at The American Academy of Dramatic Arts for ten years.

Ironically, although my adoptive parents had no interest in show business, when I had the chance to meet my birth parents in 1992 when I was 40, I discovered that my birth mother had been a writer and that her father had played the ukulele! I also discovered that my birth father had been a singer in Chicago (my birth town) night clubs singing Al Jolson songs and that his mother had played piano for silent movies at The Chicago Theater in the 1920s! So much for nature vs. nurture!

**Q.** You told me one time that your first job in the entertainment industry was writing comedy for Groucho Marx. How did that come about?

**A.** That was in 1968 when I was about 15 years old. It was my first writing job even though I'd been an actor already for years as I said. As a young kid, because of my love for the past, I started corresponding with any old star I could locate --Jimmy Durante, Eddie Cantor, Charlie Chaplin (who I wound up meeting in 1972 when he returned to America), Oscar Levant, Bud Abbott (who I interviewed on tape when I was in high school) and, of course, Groucho.

Groucho was such a sweet man and was an obsessive letter writer, answering practically every letter he ever received. I wrote some song parodies and sketches for him, "on spec" of course, when I was in high school, sent them to him and he wound up using some of them in his television

appearances. Very kind man. He didn't have to do that. I finally got to meet him at "The Dick Cavett Show" a few years later.

**Q.** You studied screen-writing in school. That's how you met Rod Serling. How old were you at the time and did this start an instant friendship?

**A.** I met Rod Serling when I was a freshman at Ithaca College in 1970 where he had just started teaching screenwriting. One of the kindest men I've ever known. I took his course for four years, and we became close friends working on radio shows together, documentary films, commercials and even co-hosting a weekly series called "The Sunday Show." It was a talk/variety show and we did it for about two years on WCIC-TV in Ithaca, New York. I graduated in 1974 and Rod passed away in 1975 when he was only 50. I miss him terribly. A truly wonderful man.

**Q.** In addition to Rod Serling and Groucho, you've worked with Billy Crystal, Milton Berle, Victor Borge, Arthur Godfrey, Soupy Sales, and many more. Do you have any favorite anecdotes you'd like to share with the readers?

**A.** I have been so fortunate to have known and worked with so many great people. Being in the right place at the right time, I guess. In response to some of your specific queries, Billy Crystal (whose brother Richie I'd known when we worked together at The William Morris Agency)

appeared on the bill in the stage show I produced for the 1976 Democratic National Convention Gala at The Statler Hilton Hotel in NYC with Lauren Bacall.

In 1977, I became a TV producer at WPIX Television in NYC and produced shows with Milton Berle, Victor Borge, Tommy Smothers, among many others, and Soupy Sales who became my dearest friend for the next 35 years and performed a cameo in my 1994 silent movie "How To Be A Moving Picture Star" -- his final film role. I even had the honor of writing and producing Miss Gloria Swanson's -- a great uke player herself, by the way -- last TV series. What a wonderful woman. I was deeply in love with her. I later went on to be editor of Show Magazine and to be a producer at The ABC Network and WOR Television.

I have so many anecdotes about the people I've worked with but I'm sure this tirade of mine has become boring enough as it is. But I'll tell you one because it is a weird story and involves a ukulele icon. When I was working in the commercial department of the famous William Morris theatrical agency in NYC when I was in my early twenties, one of our clients was the legendary and extremely popular broadcaster Arthur Godfrey -- at one time the most powerful figure in the media -- and I was offered a job moonlighting as writer of his one man show called "Arthur Godfrey -- My Fifty Years In Broadcasting."



Arthur was a true enigma -- idolized and revered for his warmth and charm by his massive audience of radio and TV fans but precisely the opposite as a human being off mike and off camera. Yet, I got along with him. Eventually, I used to go over to his office on East 54th Street every evening after my work day at William Morris and work with him for a few hours. This schedule went on for about six months.

Arthur used to sit behind his desk in his office and I would sit in this big, plush, leather recliner chair opposite him. On one of my early sessions with him, I was nestled in the chair, recording his statements with my Panasonic cassette recorder and taking notes when all of a sudden I began sweating profusely and couldn't understand why. I was really burning up. This went on for an hour or so. Mr. Godfrey didn't appear to be phased at my obvious discomfort at all.

I finally said to him: "I'm sorry but I think I'm coming down with malaria. I think I've gotta get out of here!" Without looking up from his desk, he said: "You probably turned on the heat setting on the chair by mistake when you sat down." It turns out that there were control buttons for heat, massage, etc. hidden under the leather of the left arm of the chair that I knew nothing about. But Godfrey knew about it and let me literally "stew" there for so long without tipping me off. A bit of a perverse sense of humor.

As a punch line, after working with him all that time, when the script was finished, my boss at William Morris called Godfrey about my payment. At first Godfrey asked him what size suit I wore. I was listening on the earpiece on the other phone in the office. I motioned and whispered to my boss that I already had a suit and needed money. I couldn't pay my rent and bills with a suit. Anyway, a few weeks later, I received an envelope from Godfrey containing an inscribed photograph and a check for one hundred and fifty dollars! For six months work! I placed the photo in a frame but never cashed the check -- saving it as a reminder of the darker side of show business. But it was an honor to work for Mr. Godfrey. Guess I should've taken the suit, huh?

**Q.** Moving to music... You had a great career in TV production, screen-writing, even comedy writing. When did you first entertain the idea of being a musical performer?

**A.** As I already said, I'd been a performer as a kid so performing was always first and foremost in my heart. After years working as a talk show host, TV producer, theatrical agent and magazine editor, I decided to return to my roots. At the same time, I met and started courting the young lady who would soon become my first wife. She was a very talented actress and a very gifted impressionist as well. Since I'd been doing impersonations all my life, and considering how hard acting

roles were to come by for young actresses, I decided to write a night club act for us to do our musical comedy impersonations. We did pretty well playing all the night clubs and hotels in New York City and the hotels and resorts in The Catskills, The Poconos and Atlantic City. We did this for nearly ten years. I didn't start playing the ukulele professionally until 1986 at the suggestion of Tiny Tim and as my wife and I were winding down our night club act.

**Q.** You've intentionally chose public domain tunes to avoid licensing issues and copyright squabbles. Was that always the case?

**A.** I really didn't originally choose public domain tunes to avoid copyright problems, it just turned out that the older songs were my favorites since I was a kid. You know, Mickey, that those are some of the sweetest pop tunes ever written. It wasn't until relatively recently, with the change of laws thanks to the Berne Convention and the late Congressman Sonny Bono, that the matter of copyright became an issue at all.

When I first started singing with my uke over thirty years ago you could sing anything you wanted as most clubs and radio/TV stations were covered by paying a modest ASCAP/BMI fee covering the entire year. It has only recently become a murky problem. Because of the changes in the law, I decided to create three or four one hour play sets of only public domain

tunes. Ironically, I loved these songs anyway and had been doing them in my act for years anyway. But it's unfair. Not only do the artists suffer but the estates of the composers and their heirs suffer as well because it definitely cuts down on the usage of some pretty great old songs.

**Q.** We share a love of the same repertoire: Carmichael, Irving Berlin, Gus Kahn, and other artists of the Tin Pan Alley era (and some 19th century tunesmiths-- like Stephen Foster who is in my family lineage). Were you exposed to this great music as a child?

**A.** Wow, Mickey! Hoagy, Irving and Gus Kahn?! Who needs anything else, right? And you're related to Stephen Collins Foster????!! Gimme a break! Holy Mackerel! America's first song writer and one of the greatest of all time! I love all of the 19th Century songwriters -- Foster, Ethelbert Nevin, Dan Emmett, and the others and do their compositions in my act. Such sweet work, born and developed in the religious environs of churches and synagogues. Makes all the difference, I think. All those guys and the folks that came after them -- Berlin, Gershwin, Basie, Fats Waller, etc., --all started playing in houses of worship and it shows in the beauty and sweetness of their compositions and is one reason why their music struck such a chord with the public.

I was only exposed to this music through general life and my own research and delving when

I was a kid since, as I said, my parents had no overt interest in this stuff. After all, they grew up with it. You must tell me about your link to Stephen Foster one day and, in the mean time, can I have your autograph?

**Q.** A lot of tunes were written with ukulele in mind. Has that influenced your song list?

**A.** Not really, I don't think. I just picked songs that I liked and, thanks to May Singhi Breen (The Ukulele Lady) who charted so many thousands of songs for the uke in the twenties and thirties, so many of the song sheets contained uke chords in the charts. But I gave up working from sheet music very early on and started learning songs by ear. Much easier for me. And Roy Smeck told me to never look at your hands when you play -- look at the audience. Also, so many songwriters -- especially Harry Warren, Al Dubin, Joe Burke, among others -- wrote their charts very complicatedly. I mean, after all, they never had to perform them so they didn't care. Sometimes six or seven chord changes every measure!

The easiest to play of those guys is Irving Berlin because he kept his chords and melodies very simple. He knew that if the public couldn't play his music easily they wouldn't buy the sheet music. That's one reason why he out sold everybody else. Oh, and it didn't hurt that his songs were the most beautiful!

**Q.** You play Martin ukuleles almost exclusively. Have you owned anything other than

Martin ukes? Who introduced you to them?

**A.** When I first started playing the uke professionally thirty years ago, I had absolutely no idea of one ukulele from another. There were no ukulele internet groups or websites to research. So I played any uke I could get my hands on knowing nothing about quality at all. Around 1992, I got my first brand new uke, a Kamaka soprano. God bless my friend the wonderful Chris Kamaka who spent hours on the phone with me from Honolulu testing and choosing the right one for me!

Yes, Mickey, I am a Martin man through and through. Not that there aren't other great ukuleles out there but, for my purposes, I find them to be the finest sounding and most easily playable ukes ever made. And I only play vintage Martins because that's all I've had the pleasure of playing although I hear that the new line of Martin ukes are pretty good as well.

I only own three ukuleles now-- a 1918 Martin Style 1, a 1960s Japanese thing (which is pretty darn good) and my main ax, a late 1940s early 1950s Martin Style O. And I prefer mahogany over koa personally. As an old vaudevillian, I find that the mahogany gives me that vaudeville bark, different from the beautiful Hawaiian tone of koa. Old fogey that I am, I also believe the only true ukulele to be the soprano -- the other sizes are just bastardizations created for former guitar players who couldn't adjust to the small size.





Left to right, top to bottom:  
Arthur Tracy and Spats  
With Lauren Bacall  
With Victor Borge  
With Brooke Shields



With Tommy Smothers  
(of the Smothers Brothers at  
WPIX-TV in 1978)



**Q.** Do you play any other musical instruments?

**A.** I studied piano briefly as a kid at Interlochen in Michigan. But since the only things I can play on the keyboard is "12th Street Rag" and the first ten bars of Grieg's Piano Concerto, you ain't gonna find me doing a piano recital any time soon.

**Q.** When did you first meet Tiny Tim?

**A.** Even though Tiny Tim and I had crossed paths over the years in different shows in the seventies, I didn't really get to know him until 1986 when I was producing Joe Franklin's TV show in NYC and Tim was a frequent guest. We wound up doing some shows together and discovered we had a lot in common -- old music, song sheets, 78s, etc. -- and I found him to be very sweet and kind, at least to me. It was Tiny who first suggested that I take up the ukulele thinking it would compliment my voice well.

**Q.** Some people attribute the fall of ukulele popularity post – Arthur Godfrey – on Tiny's Tip Toe Through the Tulips performance on Rowan and Martin's Laugh-In. Really, that's an unfair assessment. Ukulele popularity rises and falls every couple of decades it seems. When you first met Tiny Tim, did you know that you and Tiny both share the love of the same old jazz tunes and standards?

**A.** Don't get me started on this, Mickey! Oops! Too late. You already did. Years ago when I

belonged to all those crazy internet ukulele sites and blogs, I was constantly getting into dust ups with many members who felt that Tiny had somehow ruined the reputation of the ukulele. I used to ask them "what reputation?" Did Jack Benny ruin the reputation of the violin Did Liberace ruin the reputation of the piano? That's ridiculous. You are totally correct, Mickey, regarding the strange cyclical popularity of the jumping flea.

Yes, it was our mutual love of old music that was a major part of our friendship. When I say friendship, I must clarify that I wasn't close friends with Tiny. We'd work together on shows and sometimes go to thrift stores in search of 78s and song sheets. But nobody really knew Tiny.

From what I could tell, Tiny had no real friends. As I talk about in my one man show, "GOD LOVES TINY TIM," Tim had problems with closeness and intimacy.

And when you say "jazz tunes" and "standards," even though Tiny admired and performed the songs of his youth -- the songs of Bing Crosby and Russ Columbo and especially his dear friend Rudy Vallee -- Tiny's real musical love was the pre-World War 1 era of Henry Burr and Billy Murray and Irving Kaufman. It was that early romantic era that was foremost in his heart.

**Q.** How was Tiny Tim an influence in your musical career?

**A.** Aside from his kindness and spirituality, I think the biggest influence Tiny Tim had on me was introducing me to the ukulele in the first place, telling me he thought it would compliment my singing voice very well. I really hate to say this but when I was young back in the 1960s and Tiny exploded onto the national entertainment scene, I was never a really big fan of his. I mean I enjoyed him on "The Tonight Show" and "Rowan and Martin's Laugh In" and everything but saw him mostly as a novelty act – or a "nut" act as it used to be called back in vaudeville days. After I met him, I liked the man Tiny Tim much more than I liked the performer Tiny Tim. As time went on, however, I have come to realize his true brilliance as an entertainer and historian.

**Q.** How long were you friends before you ever worked together?

**A.** As I mentioned previously, I'd run into Tiny on occasion over the years but didn't get to know him until 1986 when we worked together and hung out a little until my wife and I moved to Los Angeles and Tiny and I lost touch. When I moved back to New York City a few years later, Tiny had moved from his place at the Hotel Olcott in Manhattan and I was unable to find him. When I did know him, I tried to interest him in doing a one man show in his own words about his life and career. He really wasn't getting much work at that point and I thought it would be a great idea and so did he. It was that material that became the



nucleus for my current one man musical drama "GOD LOVES TINY TIM."

**Q.** Before Tiny Tim passed away he "got religion"--so to speak. Was that part of what you had in mind when you put together "God Loves Tiny Tim"?

**A.** Tiny had become a devoutly religious man when he was very young experiencing numerous "epiphanies" throughout his life, many of which I explore in my play. It wasn't only at the end of his life. He was a conflicted zealot, a man full of contradictions like the rest of us, and it is that glaring paradoxical part of Tiny Tim that is the thread running through my entire play. He really tried to be good but, as he used to say, he was just a "miserable sinner" like the rest of us. He prayed and sang hymns for many hours every day. God was the most important thing in his life since he was a young boy and it is this complex and flawed character-- with his cruelty and kindness-- that elicits the most gasps from the audiences at my performances.

**Q.** Tell us about the show.

**A.** I decided to create "GOD LOVES TINY TIM" back in 2007 when my friend Uke Jackson offered me a ninety minute slot at his upcoming 2008 New York Ukulele Festival. I wrote it in four days. I'd performed at the festival since the first edition in 2006 but this was my first chance to have an afternoon time slot all my own. I'd always had a leaning toward one

person shows since writing a one woman show in Los Angeles back in 1987 called "Deathbed" concerning the final night of Marilyn Monroe's life and had written and performed a critically acclaimed one man show called "Jolson Sings Tonight" at the Off Broadway Triad Theater in 1996.

As I think I said before, I decided to do the play in response to the plethora of negative stuff that had been written about Tiny on the various ukulele internet sites. I wanted to reveal the real Tiny Tim to all of the "experts" who never knew him. Their ceaseless negativity began to offend me and I felt the man needed some defense, not being here anymore to do it himself. The thunderous applause, standing ovation and glowing reviews on the ukulele sites was truly overwhelming to me since the audience that first premier day was comprised mostly of uke players who disliked me, disliked Tiny and came in wanting to hate it. That initial positive response meant a great deal to me.

Anyway, the owner of the theatre that hosted the NYC UKEFEST was so impressed, I was made an offer to perform it there regularly following the uke festival and it went on to run over a year Off Broadway at two different theatres and at numerous one night stands, concert venues, clubs, churches, schools, etc. and received absolutely wonderful press reviews and critical and audience acclaim. I and the

play have been extremely blessed I must say.

I subtitled "GOD LOVES TINY TIM" a "one man odyssey by and with Spats White" but it has turned out to be much, much more than that. After over 50 years in show business it is the first musical comedy tragedy I've ever encountered. I can't tell you the feeling of hearing the audience laugh, applaud and sob uncontrollably. Very unusual. The famous mentalist The Amazing Kreskin attended a recent performance here Off Broadway in NYC in honor of what would have been Tiny's 85th birthday and he wrote a superb and glowing review of the show on his website for which I am so grateful. He was touched more by the sadness and pathos in the show more than anything else. Many critics have commented on my choice of closing the show with a totally surprising and unexpected ending that brings the audience to tears and to their feet at the same time. I simply cannot believe it each and every time I experience it, Mickey. But I am eternally grateful. To me, the play is a way for me to get God's word out there through Tiny's voice. The way Tiny would have wanted it. Nothing more.

**Q.** Are there still plans to take the show on the road? If so, how many engagements are in the works?

**A.** Nearly two years ago, I was approached by a prominent stage and television producer/director who had read

about me and the show on the internet and interested in producing "GOD LOVES TINY TIM" as a stage revival and television special. Since that time I've performed the show at venues all over NYC, filmed a videotape version at Lincoln Center here in New York and had a very successful and gratifying special performance here in New York City on what would have been Tiny Tim's 85th birthday on April 12th 2017.

The plans for the production remain basically intact but my vision for the show is unorthodox, to say the least, compared to the usual theatrical objectives sought by most productions. I have always seen the show as a "moveable feast" –a floating crap game, so to speak– moving constantly to different locations and venues for small audiences and folks who would not normally have access to big theatrical presentations. Unfortunately, the words "small audiences" are not words most producers are fond of hearing. But that's the way I like it and the way I want it. I also promised myself years ago that any and all of my proceeds from the show would go directly to charity, a financial plan most producers also view as insane. I think that's the way Tiny would have wanted it also. He was never aware of money or what he was getting paid just his desire to entertain the audience. At this point in my life and career, I want to give back. Give back in return for all that I have received. Anyway, everything is in God's hands.

**Q.** What's next? Do you have any future plans for music?

**A.** To be honest with you, Mickey, my only future hopes and plans musically and artistically are to get "GOD LOVES TINY TIM" to as many people as I can. To reveal the real Tiny Tim to them and not the one dimensional cartoon character they laughed at on "Laugh In" and "The Tonight Show." I can't tell you how deeply gratifying it is to be approached after a performance by young kids of eighteen or nineteen who have no idea who Tiny Tim was but who were so touched by his story because they, too, were persecuted, bullied and ridiculed by family and friends for being different. That really means everything to me along with doing the show at hospitals and nursing homes where an audience comprised of people who can barely move rise to their feet and clap and cheer. It makes me break down, I tell you. These are the audiences who really need entertainment and really deserve it.

**Q.** Do you have any albums available?

**A.** I've only recorded one CD– "Spats White and His Blue Ukulele" –for which I received very gratifying reaction and wide air play on radio. People always encouraged me to sell my CDs at my gigs but I just didn't want to do that. I always gave them away for free to anyone who wanted them. I was just so grateful that people would show up at my shows to

hear me that I figured they deserved a gift. Everyone can hear my CD free on my website [www.spatswhite.com](http://www.spatswhite.com)

**Q.** Do you ever think about retirement?

**A.** I have never thought about retiring. Performing is a love not a job to me and I can't imagine life without it. And besides, I have a landlord and bill collectors who won't allow me to retire!

**Q.** Let's shoot back into ancient history... You were at the 1964 World's Fair in New York City. You worked with your uncle right near the Polynesian Exhibit. I actually attended the Polynesian performance (music and dance). How old were you when you were at the World's Fair? Did that Polynesian performance (or Hawaiian ukulele) ever influence you musically?

**A.** Regarding the 1964-65 New York World's Fair, my father had the souvenir concessions at the Venezuelan Pavilion and the Wisconsin Pavilion where they displayed the world's largest cheese encased in a huge refrigerated truck! I turned 12 years old the summer of 1964 and even though I was studying summers at Interlochen in Michigan and doing summer stock the summer of '65 in Stockbridge, Massachusetts, I did work at the fair the weeks before and after my summer gigs elsewhere. To be honest with you, I have no recollection of the Polynesian Pavilion you mention but I do recall fondly



The Red Garter Saloon right next to my father's souvenir stand at the Wisconsin Pavilion where they played ragtime music all night long from a great ragtime band. It was a delightful experience. But if I ever see another Oscar Mayer wiener or Belgian waffle, it'll be too soon!

**Q.** Did you have any musical mentors? Were there any performers who inspired you? Have you mentored any other artists?

**A.** Aside from Tiny Tim, Roy Smeck and my old music teacher at Interlochen, Maestro Van Cliburn, most of my musical mentors were long gone from this earth by the time I absorbed them. But there were so many -- Al Jolson, Eddie Cantor, Ted Lewis, Cliff Edwards, Bing Crosby, Jimmy Durante -- just to name a few.

Although I have taught ukulele on occasion, I can't honestly say that I have ever mentored anyone, except unknowingly from afar. Regrettably, I am not that good of a player to qualify for that role.

**Q.** Are there any resources that you can recommend for people interested in the heyday of Tin Pan Alley, Vaudeville, and the 20th century love affair with ukulele?

**A.** There are so many wonderful websites out there now and great books and re-issued recordings available that everyone can get a real, true sample of almost all of the great old music and performers

from Tin Pan Alley, The Brill Building, vaudeville, old radio, etc. It is so much more available than when we were coming up, Mickey.

**Q.** One last question: Larry Lessig (The Future of Ideas) believes that our modern copyright law has stifled creativity and is extreme-- thanks in large part to Disney's desire to protect Mickey Mouse from "going public" --so to speak. Do you think that our present copyright laws do hamper creativity? I know that it has influenced your songlist; hence, the question.

**A.** As I think I touched on above, the current copyright situation has indeed stifled creativity, but certainly interpretation and performance. The old 28 year copyright registration term and subsequent 28 year renewal gave young performers and musicians the hope that at least some day this great music would be available to learn from and re-create for future generations. Now it's not the same.

I am just grateful, as I am sure you are Mickey, that I lived in a time when I was able to absorb this wonderful music, learn from the performers and call many of them my dear friends. I am also grateful to you, my friend, for the honor of partaking in this interview for your wonderful publication. I hope it will be of interest to some of your readers. Thank you. And as my friend Tiny Tim used to say -- all we can do is try our best and pray for the rest!

-----  
Thank You for a great interview, Spats. I learned a lot about both you and Tiny Tim. I can't wait to see "God Loves Tiny Tim" when I get a chance.

Spats White plays some of the greatest songs of the American song-book. Don't pass up the chance to see him on stage.

Check out [www.spatswhite.com](http://www.spatswhite.com) and the videos. While you're at it, check out Spats White's CD on Soundcloud. There's a link on his website. Enjoy.





Left to right, to bottom:  
Spats with Gloria Swanson  
With the Amazing Kreskin

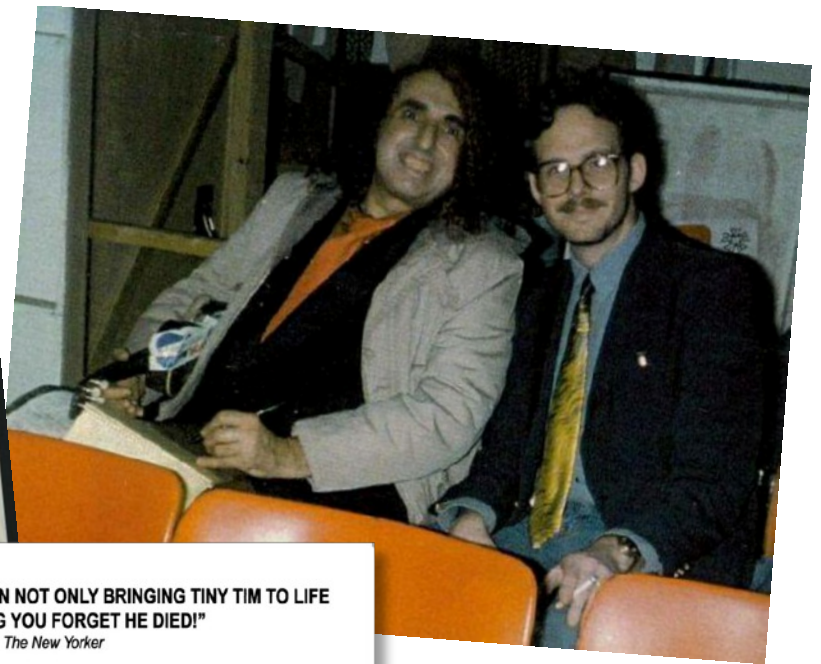
Spats with Rod Serling on the  
set of their TV show.

With Henry Youngman

A young Spats (1965)





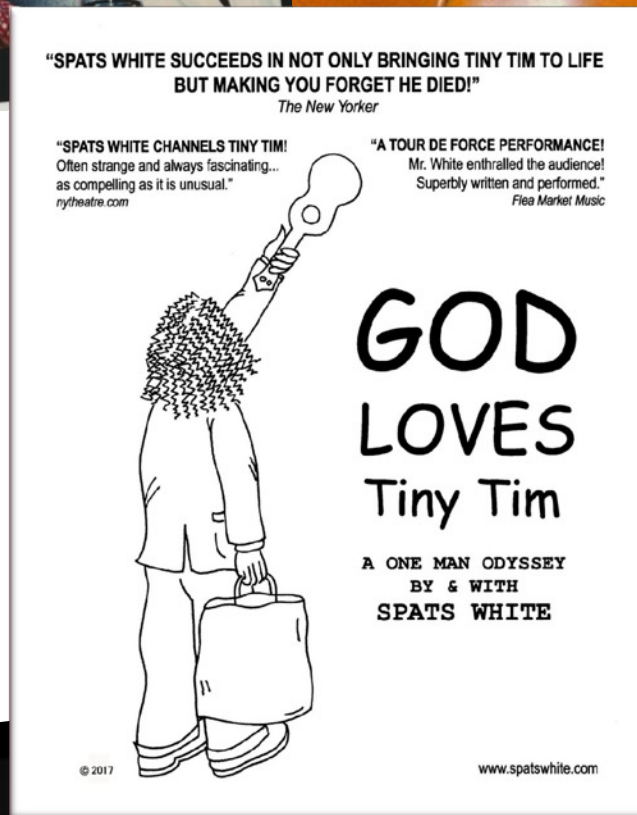


Left to right, top to bottom:  
Spats with Soupy Sales  
With Tiny Tim

God Loves Tiny Tim poster

Spats at the NYC Uke Fest

Spats performance in God  
Loves Tiny Tim.





# The History of A Musical Instrument Company

While researching the history of the Lyon & Healy Bell ukulele I became fascinated with how many twists and turns came about in the story of Washburn, Oscar Schmidt, and Lyon and Healy. I have a feeling that a lot of other musical instrument companies have similar stories.

Lyon & Healy Music was founded by George Washburn Lyon and Patrick J. Healy in 1864 with the intention of selling sheet music across America.

By 1883 George Washburn Lyon started producing stringed instruments. In less than ten years, the Washburn musical instrument brand was the number one producer of mandolins in America. By 1892, the company was said to be producing more than 100,000 instruments a year.

In 1912, Washburn introduced the first dreadnought-sized guitar– the Lakeside Jumbo. By 1930, Gibson and Epiphone were producing large, deep-bodied dreadnought guitars competing with Oscar Schmidt.

Lyon & Healy acquired the "Regal" brand in 1905, but, it was sold to the "Regal Musical Instrument Company" three years later.

In 1928, Lyon & Healy sold the guitar making side of the company to "Tonk Brothers" who later turned the manufacturing

side of the operation over to the "Regal Musical Instrument Company" (I am not sure of the exact date).

Regal revived the Washburn brand, but by 1940 not much was left of it.

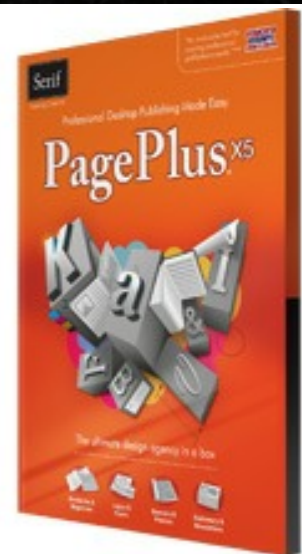
In 1972 Tom and Judy Beckman used the Washburn name on guitars manufactured in Japan. They started importing them into the US market in 1974, but in 1977, Rudy Schlacher and Rick Johnstone of "Fretted Instruments, Inc" bought the rights to the Washburn name. They soon setup operations in Chicago and also acquired the Oscar Schmidt Autoharps.

In 1987 Schlacher bought out his partner's share of the business and changed the operation's name to Washburn International.

In 2002 Washburn acquired the US Music Corporation. In 2009, Schlacher sold USM to Jam Industries. They own the following brands.

Washburn Guitars, Oscar Schmidt, Jay Turser Guitars, Randall Amp, Parker Guitars, Marshall Amp, Eden Electronics, Natal Drums, Hagstrom musical instruments, Warwick Basses, Framus musical instruments, and DigiTech Effects.

So, are you confused? I find it all very fascinating.



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# RIP Lyle Ritz

The first quarter of the year robbed us of several great entertainers. One of those was Lyle Ritz.

Lyle was one of the session musicians known as the "Wrecking Crew" in LA during the 1960s and 70s when the "Crew" recorded thousands of tracks for some of the all-time greatest hits in rock n' roll history. For example, the Beach Boys did not play on their own albums, that was the Wrecking Crew. Yep. Lyle Ritz played outless bass tracks.

In the Steve Martin movie, "The Jerk", it was Lyle who actually played the ukulele in the beach scene with Steve and Bernadette Peters.

We interviewed Lyle Ritz in this magazine in a prior issue and

An advertisement for Ohana Ukuleles. The top half features a row of eight ukuleles of various sizes and wood finishes (including natural, dark wood, and a yellow one) standing upright. Behind them is a large, stylized, translucent logo that reads "Ohana UKULELES". The background of the entire advertisement is a tropical sunset scene with palm trees and a beach.

Greetings from Ohana Ukuleles. We offer hand-crafted ukuleles in a variety of models and price points. From Soprano to Baritone sized, made from quality woods including mahogany and selected koa from Hawaii. From traditional styles to vintage models, we have a unique product line for those searching for something exciting and original. Call us or check our web site for more info!

# Ohana Ukuleles

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we are republishing that interview in this issue in memory of this great performer.

Austin Kaiser met with Lyle Ritz for the original article and accompanying interview.

When I first heard news of Lyle's passing I announced it on Facebook. Many younger players don't know who he was and don't know the contributions he made in the American music scene, but, the Wrecking Crew not only played the studio tracks on most of the memorable hits of the era, they defined the music scene.

Some of the hottest licks and most memorable guitar and bass work of the time were created by the Crew.

New York musicians played with sheet music, but, the Crew played from the heart and by invention. Improvisation was part and parcel of the whole process. If not for the recordings, who knows if they could have ever played the same thing twice.

If you want to see the Wrecking Crew documentary, it is available on Netflix and a few other places on the Internet.

Meanwhile, you can read more about Lyle Ritz on page 23.

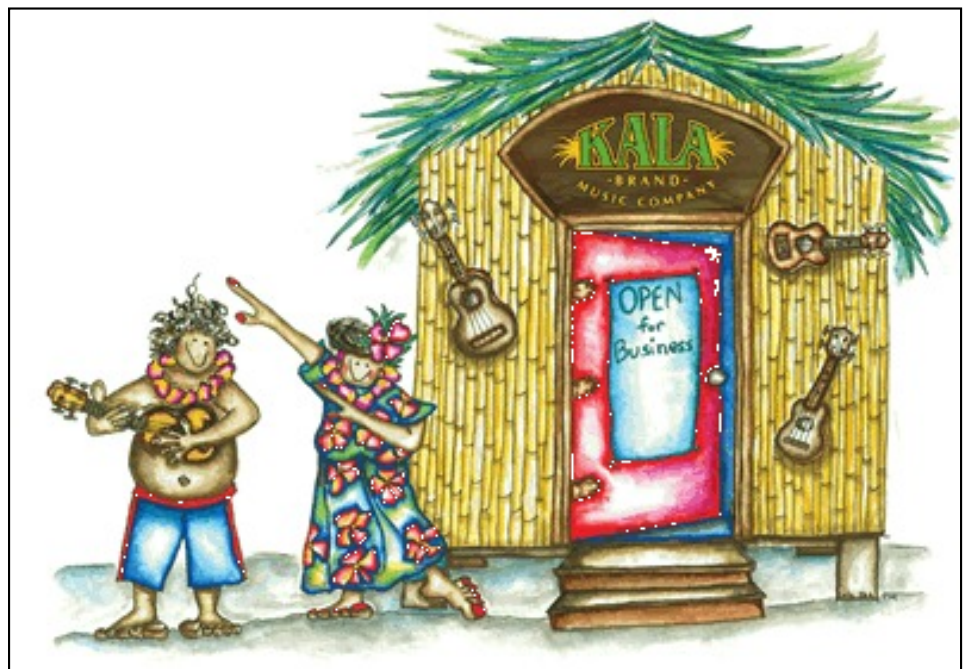
Lyle may be gone, but he will never be forgotten. He will be in the Ukulele Hall of Fame and Rock n' Roll Hall of Fame at some point I am sure. He deserves it.



## Got Uke?



You can find Kala Ukuleles at  
[www.ukeladymusic.com](http://www.ukeladymusic.com)

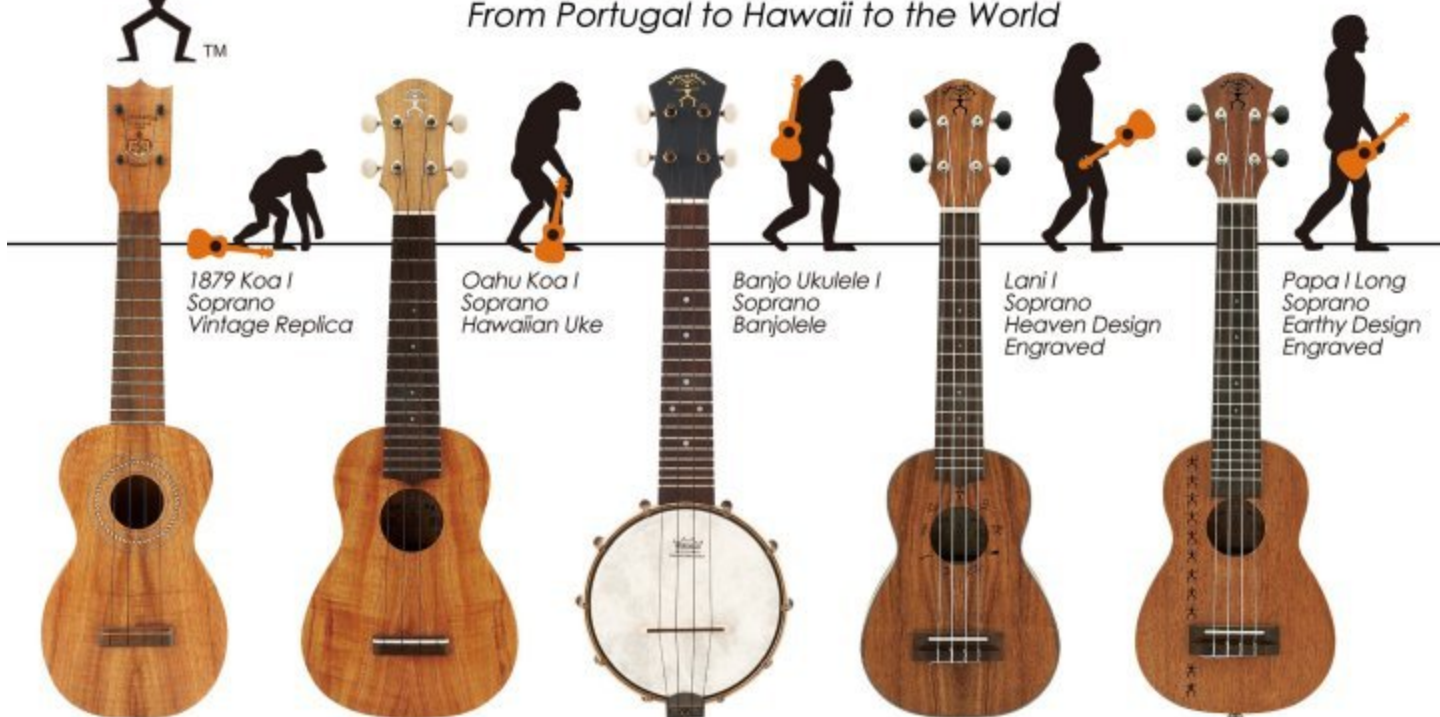






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A Part of the American Landscape



## Lyle Ritz and The Making of How About Uke

by Austin Kaiser

Lyle Ritz is an unlikely ukulele innovator. One of the great session bassists of the Sixties, he was inducted into the Musicians Hall of Fame for his work with the Wrecking Crew, the team of LA studio players whose playing graced many of the classic pop hits of the decade. Before the mid-1980s, Ritz's interest in the ukulele as anything more than a private hobby was relatively short-lived. Getting a record contract to make a uke album was a fluke to begin with, a happy accident that resulted from Barney Kessel hearing Ritz play some jazz arrangements on a uke at a music store. After making his first two groundbreaking jazz ukulele albums, *How About Uke?* (1958) and *50<sup>th</sup>-State Jazz* (1959), Ritz rarely touched the instrument for 25 years. In our interview for this article, he explained that his ukulele playing between 1960 and 1985 was mostly confined to working out harmonic ideas for his own compositions and arrangements, although he did find the time to contribute some ukulele to a few Beach Boys tracks in the early Sixties. However, the experience of having his first two albums fade from view so quickly, despite

good reviews and some radio play, disillusioned him on the ukulele for many years.

Since 1985, Ritz has recorded several acclaimed uke albums, including a live date with Ohta-San and an outstanding album with vocalist Rebecca Kilgore which he considers one of the pinnacles of his career as a jazz ukulelist. His 2006 album *No Frills* will likely be seen as one of the great ukulele recordings (it's his personal favorite as well). His collections of ukulele solo arrangements sell steadily. But Ritz still seems bemused by his status within the ukulele world. This is not false humility. He will tell you in no uncertain terms that he was not satisfied with all of *How About Uke?*, and that his unhappiness with *50<sup>th</sup>-State Jazz* caused him to back out of the third LP called for in his Verve contract and concentrate on the bass instead. Almost despite himself, he is the Charlie Christian of jazz ukulele.

The unusual nature of his achievements deserves mention. For Lyle Ritz, the ukulele was something he played "just for fun." His real love was playing the bass, and



he got paid a lot of money and derived immense musical satisfaction from his mastery of that instrument. Until his interest in the uke was reawakened in the Eighties, Ritz was unfamiliar with the recordings of the great Hawaiian and mainland ukulele players. "The way they [older uke players] played was of no interest to me," he says, although he adds that he later became acquainted with and developed deep respect for such figures as Cliff Edwards and Roy Smeck. This omission was further remedied when he moved to Hawaii in 1988 and played with Roy Sakuma, Ohta-San, and Eddie Kamae. What Ritz did on *How About Uke?* was to approach the ukulele as a lead instrument, heavily influenced by jazz guitar and completely detached from its cultural origins. His fascination with extended chords and complex voicings on his Gibson tenor took him to realms of technical and harmonic sophistication that were unprecedented in the history of the ukulele. The Ritz style was partly his own creation, the



result of “noodling” for hours on the uke during his spare time. The rest of the credit must go to the remarkable group of jazz musicians with whom he associated, and whose techniques he studied and absorbed.

The origins of Ritz’s uke playing are well known. He was working at the Southern California Music Company and attending USC in 1950 when Arthur Godfrey ignited the uke craze on his enormously popular television shows. When Ritz’s boss, Tom O’Connor, handed him the Gibson he became fascinated by its harmonic potential. The tenor was “so beautiful, so easy, so wonderful” that he saved up \$20 and bought it. He had a luthier friend put in the cutaway for easier access to the higher frets. He recalls: “I learned how to play tunes, standard tunes, show tunes. I went home and woodshedded. By now I loved big bands. My boss was fascinated. I was trying to get it to swing, but I wasn’t adept yet. I had a little niche that I was having fun with, but I didn’t think I would do anything with it.” In an earlier interview, he said that “I took it seriously right away. I just loved it.” The instructional books that were available at the time were limited, so Ritz figured out jazz chords by himself as he learned to play popular songs. He often worked on the uke in the mornings before work. O’Connor’s enthusiasm was the catalyst for Ritz’ experimentation. Some of the arrangements that would later appear on *How About Uke?* were developed while Ritz

worked at the music store. He would work out his arrangements and then play them for his boss, or for customers who had never heard such chords and single-note solos on the ukulele.

In the interview for this article, Ritz called himself “aimless” during his time as a college student. He had little interest in his academic work at USC, where he played second fiddle in the orchestra. He believes



*Lyle Ritz in KFI Radio recording session, circa 1954*

that getting drafted in 1952 was “the best thing that ever happened to me,” not least because it also marked a turning point in his musical development. Although the Korean War was raging across the Pacific, Ritz was assigned as a tuba player with the marching band at an Army base in California. Stan Kenton’s sax player, Lennie Niehaus, was stationed with Ritz, and the two began regularly jamming late into the night. According to Ritz, this experience taught him most

of what he knows about playing in time and making it swing. Playing bass with and learning about jazz from Niehaus drastically improved Ritz’s understanding of “harmony, voicings, how to orchestrate.” The rhythmic assurance of his ukulele playing, a highlight of all of his recordings, had its origins in his intensive apprenticeship to Niehaus. The bass had become the center of his musical world: “I loved the bass. I concentrated on it, listened to other bass players whenever I could.” He would go to clubs and intently watch the bass player, absorbing all he could about fingerings and intonation. Occasionally at rehearsals he would pull out his uke and play some songs on it for his Army bandmates, but they never seemed to know what to make of it.

On one of his three-day passes from the Army, Ritz returned to Los Angeles. When he stopped by the Southern California Music Company, his former boss Tom O’Connor handed him a ukulele and asked him play through some of his jazz arrangements. Ritz isn’t sure what he played, though he thinks it may have been “Where or When.” As he played, a crowd began to gather around him, and with their encouragement he played a couple more standards on the uke. When he finished, a stranger approached Ritz and introduced himself as Barney Kessel, the renowned jazz guitar virtuoso. Kessel informed Ritz that he was the West Coast representative for Verve Records, and that if Ritz was

ever interested in doing something with this ukulele jazz thing, Verve would be interested in giving him a record contract. At first, Ritz was abashed; he admits that if he had known a famous jazz guitarist was listening to him, he probably wouldn't have been able to make it all the way through a song. But he told Kessel that he would be in touch after he completed his stint in the Army.

After that, the pressure was on. Ritz was discharged from the Army and moved into a rented house with composer/arranger Perry Botkin, Jr., who was very enthusiastic for Ritz's ukulele playing. While Botkin worked on his own music, Ritz was hard at work selecting and arranging the songs for his upcoming studio dates. As he practiced on his Gibson, he battled his own insecurities and self-doubts. (He admits to being his own worst critic.) He was well aware of Barney Kessel's prowess as a jazz soloist, and as they became friends, Ritz turned to Kessel's playing as a model for his own approach to jazz on the ukulele. "Barney was a prime influence. I got to play bass with him in his jazz trio. I got a close look at his technique. I tried to emulate his jazz groove, but realistically I could only approach his level. I credit him for much of the way I play uke," he explains. For an aspiring jazz uke player, working with and observing Kessel was an invaluable education in voicings, advanced chordal work, and fluid single-note soloing. In comparison, Ritz says, "I was ill-equipped. I

wasn't ready, I wasn't that good. But there was a kernel of originality in what I was doing." He slaved away at his playing, determined to make a statement on his first-ever album. He worked on scales and soloing, but this was always secondary to his real interest: "I spent much time (still do) developing harmonies, chord progressions, and voicings. Single-note stuff had to fend for itself. I so infrequently played uke with anyone else."

Ritz's technical prowess and fluency with altered chords were well beyond that of virtually any of his mainland predecessors on the ukulele, with the exception of Roy Smeck. In Hawaii in the late Fifties, Eddie Kamae was playing jazz, Latin, and classical arrangements of extraordinary sophistication and virtuosity, but he was perhaps the only other ukulelist doing comparably innovative work at the time. That said, Ritz's playing did have one limitation: unlike Smeck, or Kamae, or even Johnny Marvin, he did not have any discernable talent for strumming: "I didn't develop a strum at all. I was going for the sounds of the chords." Also unlike his predecessors, Ritz used a felt pick throughout most of his career as a ukulelist. "I was hooked to that pick until recent years," he says, adding that the development of a finger-style approach to soloing "has had a refreshing influence on my single-note stuff."

Finally, around a year and a half after first playing for Barney Kessel in the music store, Ritz

was ready to book some dates and record his album, for which he wrote two new pieces ("Ritz Cracker" and "Sweet Joan"), both superb. The album was recorded in September, 1957, in rather awkward circumstances: "They booked me at Capitol in a huge room. No headphones, no aids, no click. We just had to wing it. I was awestruck—the night before, Nelson Riddle and Nat Cole did a session there, and Frank Sinatra had been there the previous week." Ritz was given *carte blanche* as far as material and arrangements were concerned. "I could do anything I wanted to do. I agreed to be frugal. Whatever song I wanted to do, I could do it. There were a couple of songs I had to fabricate and it didn't come off," he says with characteristic self-deprecation. He was happy to have Gene Shelton there to share some of the responsibilities for soloing: "I wanted [the flute] to take solos and relieve me."

As a work of instrumental jazz and a demonstration of the ukulele's musical potential, *How About Uke?* is a remarkably fine album. The choice of material is excellent, and Ritz's playing is swinging, creative, and impressive throughout. If his solos lacked the effortless facility of his mentor, Barney Kessel, they were nevertheless highly melodic and memorable, and it's fascinating to hear a tenor ukulele taking such a prominent role with a first-rate jazz ensemble. His mastery of chordal playing is nothing short of brilliant. The result was not

only one of the landmark recordings in the history of the ukulele, but an ambitious and mature contribution to jazz music. When one considers that this was Ritz's debut as a recording artist and arranger, the nature of his accomplishment is even more apparent.

With the release of his first album, Ritz found himself responsible for all the promotion. Disc jockeys played the album and wrote him letters praising it. He chose to go to New York on his own dime to promote it, but the lack of response, despite the good reviews, left him with a lingering sense of disappointment. "I do the record, and there was an interesting reaction (or non-reaction) because when it first came out the disc jockeys called to interview me and said, 'What a great job!'" he says. But in the end, he played no gigs and faced the prospect of making two more contractually obligated albums of jazz ukulele. "It didn't make enough money to buy me a cup of coffee. I didn't care; I thought if I made money, I would make it through performances, but I didn't."

The making of *50<sup>th</sup>-State Jazz* was not a musically satisfying process for Ritz. Barney Kessel had departed Verve shortly before *How About Uke?* was recorded. Ritz was more or less on his own, with little guidance or encouragement from his label. For the second album, he decided to rehearse the band before recording

"because I was so unsure of my own chops." He was dissatisfied with the recording process as well as the finished product: "I did the second [album] I was contracted for and that was really unfortunate. I was trying to say something but I wasn't ready to say it. There's a couple of nice things on there, but generally it was my swan song. I thought, 'I can't do this, I don't like it.' I didn't like the way it came off. It didn't swing. I had an 8-piece ensemble and it was murderous." When *50<sup>th</sup>-State Jazz* was released, it received good reviews but low sales.

By this time, Ritz was disillusioned with his brief career as a jazz ukulelist. Although he was pleased by the critical praise his albums had received, he had come to the reasonable conclusion that there was no future for him on the uke, at least if he wanted to make his living as a professional musician. It had become something of a distraction from his career as a bassist. He was in demand and making a name for himself on the bass. Why expend the energy trying to make the ukulele more respectable when no one seemed to be listening? Still only in his late twenties, he observes that he "didn't have the moxy" to forge ahead with another album for Verve. "It didn't reach many people," he adds. "I worked my buns off and nobody got it. I didn't want it. I thought, 'This isn't working, folks. Few people are getting it. I want to play the bass.'" During our interview, though, he

admitted that he would have continued playing jazz on the ukulele had the albums generated more sustained interest and financial security. Another issue was his relative youth and inexperience: "I was intimidated. My feeling was that I should have had some help, but I didn't."

Ritz was still contracted for a third album with Verve, but his eagerness to move on was evident to the executives at the label. One phone call brought his professional ukulele career to an end: "It came time to do the third LP for Verve. I talked to the bossman at Verve on the phone. He said, 'You don't really want to do this album, do you?' I said, 'I don't.'" A gentleman's agreement over the phone terminated Ritz's record contract and freed him to pursue the bass, which, of course, he did throughout the Sixties and Seventies in a truly illustrious career as a session bassist. The ukulele was put aside and mostly forgotten by Ritz, who says that the topic would occasionally resurface during his session career. Some of his fellow musicians were aware of his brief career as a jazz ukulelist, and he first came to Phil Spector's attention when the latter heard about Ritz's uke albums and hired him as a bassist on many classic hits.

The reemergence of the ukulele in Ritz's life was unexpected. In 1985, as his session bass career was coming to a close, he learned that there was an entire generation of Hawaiian ukulele players who had been



influenced by his albums from the late Fifties. Roy Sakuma, a student of Ohta-San and a highly respected player and teacher in Hawaii, contacted Ritz out of the blue by phone. He explained that he was going to be holding a ukulele festival that fall and wondered if Ritz would be amenable to taking part. He also asked if he could come to California, rent a hotel near Ritz, and take ukulele lessons! All this more than a quarter of a century after Ritz had last done any serious uke playing.

In Ritz's own words: "He said, 'I want to meet you. I want to take lessons from you. I'll get a hotel near where you are, just give me a week.' I didn't have any chops, I couldn't play one song from beginning to end without stopping or making mistakes. I worked for that [getting his chops back]. He came and we hung out for a week and he took lessons. He was better than me! He invited me to come to Hawaii and play in the festival. I said, 'I don't play anymore.' He said, 'You got six months,' so I worked and worked and worked. Sakuma—he was an important factor. I worked for him playing bass in Hawaiian saloons." Attending Sakuma's festival and discovering the islands from which the ukulele originated was a turning point for Ritz. By 1988, he had moved with his wife and daughter from California to Hawaii, where he immersed himself in the uke community, met Hawaiian ukulelists such as Byron Yasui and Benny Chong who had been influenced by his Verve

records, played some bass, and began work on the successful *Jumpin' Jim's Ukulele Masters* series of solo arrangement books to which he has now contributed three outstanding volumes. In the early 2000s, Ritz and his family moved to Portland, Oregon, where he has been heavily involved in the local uke scene.

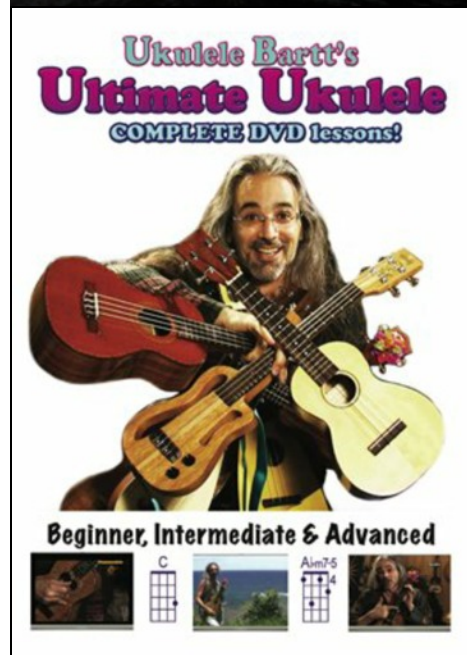
He has also recorded several more outstanding albums of ukulele jazz, including a live date with Ohta-San and the album *I Wish You Love* on which he accompanied the vocalist-guitarist Rebecca Kilgore. Now 81, Ritz is essentially retired from gigging or recording. Today, his uke playing is done for solitary pleasure when he is at home alone, and he continues to experiment and "noodle" on the little instrument that first intrigued him over 60 years ago. Of his 2006 album *No Frills*, Ritz says: "*No Frills*, that's pretty good. That was my best playing. I can give myself a good grade on that one. I'll probably just bow out with that."

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#### Publisher's Note:

I never met Lyle Ritz in person. I did have the opportunity to restore the images used in this article and was happy to send him the restored images prior to the release of the article.

Lyle Ritz was not just a master of the ukulele, he was one of the best studio musicians who ever lived. Lyle Ritz made music history along with the Crew.





# Ukulele Club Listings...

If you would like to list your club here, submit contact information at this website:

[http://www.tricornpublications.com/uke\\_player.htm](http://www.tricornpublications.com/uke_player.htm)  
 or e-mail me at this address:  
[mickey@tricornpublications.com](mailto:mickey@tricornpublications.com)  
 We will add you to our list.

## USA

### Arizona

**Scottsdale Strummers, Scottsdale AZ**, Contact Pat McInnis  
 weekly daytime meeting, monthly evening meeting  
 email: [pat@azukulele.com](mailto:pat@azukulele.com)  
 website: [azukulele.com](http://azukulele.com)

#### Tucson Ukesters

Tucson, AZ Meet weekly - usually on Monday afternoon  
 Contact: Kristin Keller  
[twoazin@comcast.net](mailto:twoazin@comcast.net)

#### The Tucson Ukesters - performance group

Michael Crownhart - Group leader  
 Contact: [AzRedShoe@juno.com](mailto:AzRedShoe@juno.com)

#### Phoenix Ukulele Meetup

<http://www.meetup.com/The-Phoenix-Ukulele-Meetup-Group/>  
 4th Thursday at Dolce Video Coffee Bar  
 1025 E Camelback Rd, Phoenix, AZ 85014  
 Contact: Carolyn Sechler [carolyn@azcpa.com](mailto:carolyn@azcpa.com)

#### Phoenix Ukulele Meetup

Meeting weekly on Tuesday Nights at Cabin Coffee  
 Web site: <http://www.meetup.com/The-Phoenix-Ukulele-Meetup-Group/>  
 Email: [Tom@Kanikapila.us](mailto:Tom@Kanikapila.us)

#### Tucson Ukulele Meetup

First Friday and third Sunday each month,  
 weekly gatherings of smaller practice groups.  
<http://www.meetup.com/Tucson-Ukulele-Meetup/>



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<http://www.serif.com/>

# Ukulele Clubs continued

## California

### Fresno Area

[www.valleyukes.blogspot.com](http://www.valleyukes.blogspot.com)

### Nuked Ukes

We are in Auburn California. Welcoming players from all levels.

contact: Loyce Smallwood

[loy@foothill.net](mailto:loy@foothill.net)

[www.kahi.com/loyce'sblog](http://www.kahi.com/loyce'sblog)

### Ukulele Society of America

Contact: Richard Douglas

(760) 458-6656

300 Carlsbad Village Dr.

Carlsbad CA, 92008

[http://launch.groups.yahoo.com/group/ukulele\\_society\\_of\\_america](http://launch.groups.yahoo.com/group/ukulele_society_of_america)

### Ukulele Club of Santa Cruz

[www.ukuleleclub.com](http://www.ukuleleclub.com)

One of the Largest Ukulele clubs in America! Usually meets every third thursday at Bocci's celler in Santa Cruz, but check the website, cause it sometimes changes. Or email [Andy@cruzio.com](mailto:Andy@cruzio.com) for club information.

### Ukulele University

New uke club in the Sacramento, CA. Area. Meet 1st Thursday eve monthly

email: [stuherreid@yahoo.com](mailto:stuherreid@yahoo.com)

website: [www.ukeuniversity.com](http://www.ukeuniversity.com)

### San Jose Ukulele Club

Every second and fourth Tuesday in the month.

Beginner session at 6:30 p.m. Regular meeting from 7 to 9 p.m

We meet at the Fresh Choice Restaurant in the Almaden Plaza, at the intersection of Almaden Expressway and Blossom Hill Road, just off Hwy 85.

e-mail: [sanjoseukeclub@gmail.com](mailto:sanjoseukeclub@gmail.com)

### San Diego Ukulele Meetup Group

<http://www.meetup.com/San-Diego-Ukulele-Meetup-Group/>

We meet on the first Tuesday of the month at Lion Coffee downtown @ 6:30pm.

### "Ukulele Jam" hosted by Shirley Orlando.

Meets Thursday evenings at 6:30. All levels welcome. Music is contemporary, from tin pan alley to the beach boys, etc.

16852 Gothard St Huntington Beach CA 92647.

[shirthings@aol.com](mailto:shirthings@aol.com) or [encantada@cox.net](mailto:encantada@cox.net)

### Petalukes, Petaluma, CA

Meet every Thursday night, other times too. All levels welcome, music provided

Contact: [petaluke@comcast.net](mailto:petaluke@comcast.net)

website: <http://launch.groups.yahoo.com/group/Petaluke/>

### High Desert Ukulele Club, Antelope Valley, Ca



# Ukulele Clubs continued

[highdesertukuleleclub.com](http://highdesertukuleleclub.com) or email [highdesertukuleleclub@gmail.com](mailto:highdesertukuleleclub@gmail.com)

## **Canogahana Players**

every second and fourth Sunday, Noon to 2PM  
Guitar Merchant 7503 Topanga Canyon Blvd, Canoga Park, CA

## **The Pluckin' Strummers - A Los Angeles Ukulele Club**

<http://pluckinstrummers.wordpress.com/>

Meet: 2nd & 4th Saturdays of the month. 10:00–Noon (unless otherwise stated).  
Christ Church Griffith Park, Atwater Village 3852 Edenhurst, Los Angeles, CA

## **Turlock Uke Jamz, Turlock, CA**

We meet the second Saturday of each month.  
Details at: [www.turlockukejamz.org](http://www.turlockukejamz.org)

## **Palm Desert Strummers** (Palm Springs area, California) Tuesdays, 1-3 p.m.

Joslyn Senior Center, Palm Desert (non-seniors welcome!)

Contact: Wendy Alderson: [UkuleleWahine@yahoo.com](mailto:UkuleleWahine@yahoo.com)

Highland Pickers (Strummers, Players and Singers), meet Wednesday mornings  
at 11 am in the Highland Senior Center, Highland, CA.

## **Colorado**

The **Denver Uke Community** has been bringing Ukemaniacs together since 2005, We meet each month on the third Saturday at Swallow Hill Music Association at 10:30am. All skill levels from beginner to "Wow that person ROCKS the Ukulele", we also play a wide range of music, from country, tin pan alley, Hawaiian.

<http://launch.groups.yahoo.com/group/UkuleleCommunityDenver/>

## **fortUKE @ Everyday Joe's**

144 South Mason, Fort Collins, Colorado

We meet the first Saturday of each month at Everyday Joe's Coffee House, 9:30 AM till about noon. Group strum, all abilities welcome.

## **Connecticut**

### **The KookeeUkies Ukulele Club of Southern Connecticut**

Visit our website on [meetup.com](http://www.meetup.com) for meetup dates and times.

<http://www.meetup.com/The-Ukulele-Club-of-Southern-Connecticut-The-KookeeUkies/>

### **Ukulele Club and The Four Strings Ukulele Band of Southern Connecticut,**

<http://www.orgsites.com/ct/uke-club/index.html>

[petejhnsn@sbcglobal.net](mailto:petejhnsn@sbcglobal.net)

## **Florida**

### **Tampa Bay Ukulele Society**

[www.meetup.com/tampabayukes](http://www.meetup.com/tampabayukes)

Check out the website for scheduled "meetups". This groups is very active.

# Ukulele Clubs continued

## Florida Ukulele Network

[www.FloridaUkuleleNetwork.org](http://www.FloridaUkuleleNetwork.org)

F.U.N. has meet-up groups in Broward, Palm Beach, and the Space Coast

## Georgia

Da Kine Ukers, we meet every Thursday nights from 6:30 - 8:30

pm. Location: American Legion Post 251, 2760 Duluth Hwy. (120), Duluth, GA.

Contact: Wally Choi, 517 Paden Drive, Lawrenceville, GA 30044

Email: [wchoialoha@msn.com](mailto:wchoialoha@msn.com) Website: <http://www.dakineukers.com>

## Hawaii

[UkuleleClubofKona.com](http://UkuleleClubofKona.com)

meets Wednesday evenings from 6 to 8 pm

Keauhou Shopping Center, 7 miles south of Kailua-Kona, Hawai'i

## Illinois

CHUG - CHicago Ukulele Group

We have our monthly Chicago Uke Jam the 3rd Saturday of every month.

Please contact Henry at [Henriness@gmail.com](mailto:Henriness@gmail.com)

Oak Park Ukulele Meetup Group aka The Harrison Street Ukulele Players.

Every 3rd Thursday, 6pm-8pm @ Wonderwall Music Shoppe & Emporium

325 Harrison St, Oak Park IL 60304

All other Thursdays, 7pm-9pm @ Eastgate Cafe, 102 Harrison Street Oak Park

Website: [www.ukulele.meetup.com/89](http://www.ukulele.meetup.com/89) contact: [hsup2008@gmail.com](mailto:hsup2008@gmail.com)

Northwest suburbs of Illinois (Carpentersville).

Our contact email is [nwiukes@gmail.com](mailto:nwiukes@gmail.com)

## Kansas

Kansas City Ukesters

<http://www.kcuke.com>

## Kentucky

Kentucky Ukes

meeting the fourth Sunday of every month

[KentuckianaUkes@yahoo.com](mailto:KentuckianaUkes@yahoo.com)

## Maine

Ukulele Club of Brunswick (strummin' away in Midcoast Maine)

Usually meeting the first and third Thursday of the month; all welcome.

<http://ukesofbrunswick.weebly.com/index.html>

## Michigan



# Ukulele Clubs continued

## **Ukulele Jam, 4th Tuesday night of the Month Oz's**

Music Ann Arbor MI. contact: jerryefmally@yahoo.com

## **Lansing Area Ukulele Group**

Meets once per month: Sir Pizza 201 East Grand River Lansing, MI 48906

Yahoo Group: <http://launch.groups.yahoo.com/group/lansingukesgroup>

Facebook: [tinyurl.com/lansingukes](http://tinyurl.com/lansingukes)

Email (Ben Hassenger): [lansingukes@gmail.com](mailto:lansingukes@gmail.com)

## **Club: Motor City Ukes**

second Tuesday of the month in Farmington, MI. Details on [www.meetup.com](http://www.meetup.com)

## **Minnesota**

Two Harbors Ukulele Group (THUG), Two Harbors MN.

Email: [al@agatebaymusic.com](mailto:al@agatebaymusic.com)

StrumMn ukulele players

<http://strummn.shutterfly.com/>

## **Nebraska Ukulele Strummers**

[4stringsofswing@gmail.com](mailto:4stringsofswing@gmail.com)

## **Nevada**

### **The Ukulele Club of Las Vegas**

[www.meetup.com/ukulele-club-of-las-vegas](http://www.meetup.com/ukulele-club-of-las-vegas)

### **"Uke Nights in Reno"**

Email: [Rich@PlayUke.net](mailto:Rich@PlayUke.net)

Local Uke gathering in Reno, NV

## **New Mexico**

### **The High Desert Sand Fleas**

Meet the 2nd & 4th Thursday of each month at the

Albuquerque Press Club [6pm - 9pm]

2101 Highland Park Circle, Albuquerque, New Mexico - USA

contact: Stephen Hunt via email: [hdsfgcea@gmail.com](mailto:hdsfgcea@gmail.com).

<http://sites.google.com/site/hdsfgcea/>

## **New York**

### **Ukulele Club of Potsdam (New York)**

meet-up every other Friday at 5PM at Tim's Comic & Game, 6 Main Street

contact: Tim Connolly [tim@discoverpotsdam.com](mailto:tim@discoverpotsdam.com) call: (315) 268-1598.

Loaner ukes available. Bring your uke and leave your cares at home!

### **The Lower Westchester Ukulele Club, Westchester County, New York**

<http://lowerwestchesterukuleleclub.webstarts.com/>

E-mail: [lowerwestchesterukuleleclub@hotmail.com](mailto:lowerwestchesterukuleleclub@hotmail.com)

### **Long Island Ukulele Strummers Club**

# Ukulele Clubs continued

Plainview, New York

Website: <http://sites.google.com/site/islandukeclub>

## North Carolina

### Charlotte Area Ukulele Jam

contact: [ukulelerobby@gmail.com](mailto:ukulelerobby@gmail.com)

First Saturday of each month. 3 - 5 PM At "Aloha Snow"

[www.alohasnow.com](http://www.alohasnow.com)

## Ohio

### COUP (Central Ohio Ukulele Peeps)

<http://www.meetup.com/BuckeyeUkuleleSociety/>

### Jumping Flea Night Monthly uke strum-along

Cleveland Heights, Ohio. LAST Tuesdays 7:30 - 8:30 at Coventry Village Library.

Free & open to everyone!! Contact: [melissaogrady@ymail.com](mailto:melissaogrady@ymail.com)

## Oklahoma

### Tulsa Ukulele Club

Meeting the needs of ukulele players in the greater Tulsa area

[tulsaukes.blogspot.com](http://tulsaukes.blogspot.com)

contact via e-mail: [rskjrmall@gmail.com](mailto:rskjrmall@gmail.com)

## Oregon

### Portland Ukulele Association

<http://www.pdxuke.org>

[pua@teleport.com](mailto:pua@teleport.com)

Making music together since 2001!

## Pennsylvania

**Allegheny Ukulele Kollektive** (Look for us on Facebook!) New uke group taking shape. Hoping for twice monthly jams and sing-alongs for all levels.

Hollidaysburg/Altoona, Pennsylvania, Contact: Steve [kss15@psu.edu](mailto:kss15@psu.edu)

### Scranton Ukulele Network

Meets 1st Fridays 6PM-Group Strum & Open Mic

Scranton Music Works/Gallucci Music School 207 N Washington Ave, Scranton

### Steel City Ukuleles, Regent Square

[www.steelcityukuleles.com](http://www.steelcityukuleles.com)

### Central PA Ukulele Club

First Thursday of each month, 6:30pm-8:30pm in Hummelstown, PA

Meets at the Grace United Methodist Church.

Contact: [jeff\\_lup@comcast.net](mailto:jeff_lup@comcast.net)

## South Carolina



# Ukulele Clubs continued

## **Lowcountry Strummers Ukulele Club**

Charleston, SC metro area.

We meet second Thursday of the month. All are Welcome.

[www.lowcountrystrummers.com](http://www.lowcountrystrummers.com) e-mail [lowcountrystrummers@gmail.com](mailto:lowcountrystrummers@gmail.com)

## **Greater Charlotte Ukulele Group**

<http://www.meetup.com/charlotteuke/>

## **Texas**

Robert S. Sparkman

[sparky.judy@tx.rr.com](mailto:sparky.judy@tx.rr.com)

## **Lone Star Ukulele Club (in North Dallas)**

<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/lonestarukuleles>

## **The Dallas Ukulele Headquarters**

Go to [www.meetup.com](http://www.meetup.com) and search The

Dallas Ukulele Headquarters to join the group. Lots of fun events and jams!

## **CHUG - Coffee House Ukulele Gang**

Fort Worth, Texas

This wild west ukulele gang meets the 2nd and 4th Tuesday of every month.

Contact Steve for more info. ([steve\\_w\\_williams@yahoo.com](mailto:steve_w_williams@yahoo.com))

## **Vermont**

### **Vermont Ukulele Society**

email: [vyhnak@sover.net](mailto:vyhnak@sover.net)

Meets on the second and fourth Mondays of each month.

## **Virginia**

### **Virginia Ukulele Club - Vienna, Virginia**

Meeting twice a month. All ages and levels of ability welcome.

Contact: Ben Farrington - [ukeclub@yahoo.com](mailto:ukeclub@yahoo.com)

### **Hawai'i State Society**

Falls Church, VA.

Contact: Carol Takafuji - [itaka2u@yahoo.com](mailto:itaka2u@yahoo.com)

## **Washington**

### **Seattle Ukulele Players Association (SUPA)**

[www.seattleukulele.org/](http://www.seattleukulele.org/)

### **Cowlitz Ukulele Association**

Longview, WA. 98626

[CowUke@yahoo.com](mailto:CowUke@yahoo.com)

# Ukulele Clubs continued

## Wisconsin

**CheezLand Uke Band - JoeSexton@aol.com**

Website: CheezLandUkeBand.com

Tuesday night at Leithold Music in downtown La Crosse, WI.

Beginners, Mid-Level, Advanced Players

## Canada

STRING ALONG UKULELE CLUB

DUNDAS ONTARIO CANADA

[www.stringalongukulele.ca](http://www.stringalongukulele.ca)

**Nanaimo Ukulele Circle - Nanaimo, BC, Canada**

[www.ukecircle.com](http://www.ukecircle.com) e-mail: [ukecircle@gmail.com](mailto:ukecircle@gmail.com)

## UK

### England

**Ukulele Society of Great Britain**

43 Finstock Road, London W10 6LU

Tel: 020 8960 0459

Email: [m@gjcman.com](mailto:m@gjcman.com)

**Cambridge Ukulele Co-operative [Cuckoo]**

Meet alternate Sundays 2pm-6pm

The Portland Arms Cambridge CB4 3BAIf

If you're cuckoo about ukes come and join us.

<http://www.myspace.com/cambridgeukuleleclub>

**Ukulele Philharmonic Orchestra of Sudbury**

Tuesdays evenings from 7.00pm

The Institute, Station Road, Sudbury Suffolk CO10 2SP

Beginners Welcome

**Uke Wednesday Jam**

Every Wednesday 7 till closing Downstairs @ The Royal George

Charing Cross Road, London, WC2H 0EA, U.K.

contact: Quinc email: [qnc@qnctv.com](mailto:qnc@qnctv.com)

<http://ukeweds.intodit.com>

**Tune Army Ukulele Club**

The Bay Horse, Front Street, Wickham, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE16 4EF

Meeting first Monday of the month 7:30 - 9:30

<http://tunearmy.blogspot.com/>

**UkeGlos Ukulele Club**

Meets Every Mondays every month, 8.00pm

The Exmouth Arms, Bath Rd

Cheltenham, GL53 7LX

# Ukulele Clubs continued

Wooden & banjo ukes welcome. All levels of playing ability & song styles. For full details visit: [www.ukeglos.co.uk](http://www.ukeglos.co.uk)  
<http://www.ukeglos.co.uk>

## **Ukulele Sundays host: Tim Smithies**

email: [tim@timsmithies.com](mailto:tim@timsmithies.com)

I host a Ukulele Jam session on Sunday evenings in Sheffield UK called 'Ukulele Sundays'. All welcome - 8.30pm onwards. Riverside Cafe Bar.  
<http://www.ukulelesundays.co.uk>.

## **"Brighton ukulele Sundays"**

Meet first Sunday of the month at the Brunswick Pub in Hove East Sussex UK. Visit Facebook Brighton Ukulele Sundays for more details.

## **Leicester Ukulele Club**

All welcome, First Monday of the month,  
Upstairs at Babalas Bar, Queens Road, Leicester  
Contact: [dave.davies1@virgin.net](mailto:dave.davies1@virgin.net) or [mark@littleredtruck.co.uk](mailto:mark@littleredtruck.co.uk)

## **Herts of Uke Ukulele Club**

Every 4th Sunday - 6.30pm onwards.  
Meet at The Doctors Tonic, Welwyn Garden City, Hertfordshire, AL8 6PR

All Players Welcome

Websites: <http://sites.google.com/site/hertsouke/>  
email: [hertsouke@gmail.com](mailto:hertsouke@gmail.com)

## **Luton, UK**

We meet once a fortnight at Greenbank Music Village,  
Greenbank Hal, Cobden Street, Luton, LU2 0NG  
Anyone interested can give us a call:

Keith 07745 613931

Scott 07976 895067

Gerry 07785 117029

<http://sites.google.com/site/ukuleleworkshopinluton/>

**South Hampton Uke Jam** - meets every two weeks... year 'round  
[www.southamptonukulelejam.co.uk](http://www.southamptonukulelejam.co.uk)

## **Stockton to Darlington Ukulele Express**

meets 2nd and last thursday of the month. contact [simonb250@hotmail.com](mailto:simonb250@hotmail.com)  
[ukuleleexpress.blogspot.com](http://ukuleleexpress.blogspot.com)

## **Sedgley Strummers - See the website for details**

[www.ukulelemad.com](http://www.ukulelemad.com)

## **'Colwyn Bay Ukulele Group**

We usually on Saturday morning. All players welcome.  
email [sbach1@live.co.uk](mailto:sbach1@live.co.uk)



# Ukulele Clubs continued

## **People of Lewisham's Ukulele Club (PLUC)**

Friendly, inclusive community uke group welcomes all levels of players: beginners, improvers & advanced. Meets every Tuesday eve 8pm - 10pm  
The Lewis Club, Lewisham Hospital, Lewisham High St, SE13 6LH.  
<http://lewishamukulele.wordpress.com> Simon at [pluc09@googlemail.com](mailto:pluc09@googlemail.com)

## **TimeBugs Banjo/Ukulele Group**

meets fortnightly at The Derby Engineers Club,  
Osmaston Road, Derby  
DE23 8JX  
All enquiries to: [timebugs@gmail.com](mailto:timebugs@gmail.com)

## **The Derby Ukulele Club**

Meets fortnightly at The Derby Engineers Club,  
Osmaston Road, Derby  
DE23 8JX  
All enquiries to: [derbyukes@gmail.com](mailto:derbyukes@gmail.com)

## **Ireland**

### **UKULELE IRELAND**

[ukulele@ireland.com](mailto:ukulele@ireland.com)

Irish ukulele club meets on the second saturday of each month. Players from all over Ireland. Ukeplayers of all levels welcome. If you are a visiting uke player please feel free to come along. The meetups are held at 2, eden park, Dunlaoire, Co. Dublin.

### **Ukuholics**

[truepants@eircom.net](mailto:truepants@eircom.net)

The Ukuholics are based in the Irish Midlands and meet once a month. Players of any or no ability will fit in nicely!  
Visit [www.ukuholics.webs.com](http://www.ukuholics.webs.com) for more info

## **Scotland**

### **Monday Ukearist**

Edinburgh's very own ukulele gathering. We gather once a fortnight on Mondays from 7 to 10(pm!) at Mackenzie School of English near the foot of Leith Walk

6 John's Place,  
EH6 7EP

Contact: John Hobson, +44 (0)7940 513969, [jhobson@gmail.com](mailto:jhobson@gmail.com)  
<http://ukearist.co.uk>

## **North Wales**

### **Colwyn Bay Ukulele Group**

Saturday morning between 10am and noon at various locations  
Colwyn Bay North Wales  
[colwynbug@gmail.com](mailto:colwynbug@gmail.com)

# Ukulele Clubs continued

## South Wales

### Ukulele Nights

Cardiff's Ukulele Jam Session and Cabaret

Meet Mondays 8 p.m. at assorted venues.

Visit [www.ukenights.org.uk](http://www.ukenights.org.uk) for full listings and updates.

Contact: Nick Canham [witt29-ukenights1@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:witt29-ukenights1@yahoo.co.uk) 07971 - 719626

### The Swansea Ukulele Club

Meeting Tuesday evenings from the 7th February 2012

email: [r.gent@ntlworld.com](mailto:r.gent@ntlworld.com)

<https://www.facebook.com/#!/groups/SwanseaUkuleleClub/>

**Porthcawl Ukulele Band.** Meets 8pm on Wednesdays at the Seahorse pub, South Road, Porthcawl. [www.porthcawlukuleleband.org.uk](http://www.porthcawlukuleleband.org.uk)

## France

### L'UkeDunum - Ukulele Club of Lyon

Website: <http://lukedunum.wordpress.com>

email=[lukedunum@gmail.com](mailto:lukedunum@gmail.com)

## Germany

### Ukulele Club of Germany

[info@ukulelenclub.de](mailto:info@ukulelenclub.de)

[www.ukulelenclub.de](http://www.ukulelenclub.de) (home page)

[www.ukulelenboard.de](http://www.ukulelenboard.de) (message board)

### Deutscher Ukulelenclub

c/o Raimund Sper

Korneliusstrasse 1

D-47441 Moers

tel. +49/2841-394837

fax + 49/2841-394836

[www.ukulelenclub.de](http://www.ukulelenclub.de)

## Holland

Ukulele Jamboree in Rotterdam - hosted by 'The Uke Box'

The night is comprised of a workshop, performances & open mic.

To Join the Mailing List send an e-mail to: [guaranteed2swoon@gmail.com](mailto:guaranteed2swoon@gmail.com)

To read more about this and our other ukulele projects go to:

<http://www.ukulele-interventie.blogspot.com> (Dutch)

Visit my personal blog spot and click on 'Ukulele' under "Contents" (English)

<http://www.shelleyrickey.blogspot.com>

### 'Uke & D'Uke'

<http://ukeandduke.blogspot.com/> (in Dutch)

# Ukulele Clubs continued

Note: Shelley has an Etsy store where you can find ukulele related items for sale, check it out: <http://www.thejumpingfleamarket.etsy.com>

## France

### Ukulele Club of Paris

Thursday starting 7:30 PM

Meetings are announced on the website King David Ukulele Station at this URL:

<http://www.ukulele.fr>

### C.O.U.L.E.

Club Olympique de Ukulélé de Lille et des Environs

<http://www.COULE.fr>

"Stay cool, come and play with the C.O.U.L.E."

### VSalele

Association des Ukuleliste de Valbonne Sophia Antipolis (Alpes Maritimes)

Visit [www.vsalele.org](http://www.vsalele.org) for more info

"Ukulele Social Club de Picardie"

Amiens (France)

See more here : <http://www.ukulpic.fr/>

Clermont-Ferrand call "Le BOUC" (in french, Bougnat Original Ukulele Club).

Our website is : <http://le-bouc.blogspot.com/>

## Spain

### Club del Ukelele de Madrid (SPAIN)

<http://www.facebook.com/group.php?gid=131466486122>

"Para todos los aficionados al ukelele que viven en Madrid"

"For all the ukelele fans living at Madrid"

Now preparing their first festival and meeting very soon -stay tuned!

## Australia

### Sunnybank Ukulele Players

Meets every 3rd wed of each month sunnybank, Brisbane , Australia

Contact for more information- [info@trevorgollagher.com](mailto:info@trevorgollagher.com)

## Thailand

### Ukulele Lovers Club, Bangkok Thailand

[www.facebook.com/ukuleleloversclub](http://www.facebook.com/ukuleleloversclub)

Meeting once a month - open to the public.





Stay tuned for updates and events...



## Essential Links from the World-Wide-Web

### **Brudda Bu's Ukulele Heaven**

<http://www.geocities.com/~ukulele/index.html>

If you'd like to learn the history of some of ukulele's greatest players, this site is absolutely essential.

**Ukulelia** - <http://www.ukulelia.com/>

The World's Greatest Ukulele WebLog" Need I say more?

**Ukulele Cosmos** - <http://www.ukulelecosmos.com>

One of the hottest ukulele forums on the web. Don't Miss It!

### **Ukulele Underground**

<http://www.ukuleleunderground.com/forum/index.php>

Another really popular ukulele forum, lots of Hawaiian players and folks from the West Coast of the Mainland USA.

**Flea Market Music** - <http://www.fleamarketmusic.com/default.asp>

This is Jumpin' Jim Beloff's website. He has lots of great resources and an excellent forum as well. You can buy Flukes and Fleas there, too. Jim also has lots of songbooks, DVDs, and other great stuff there.

**UkeLadyMusic** - <http://www.ukeladymusic.com/>

Auntie Noel runs a really great shop. Her passion is ukulele and it shows.

Contact Us: phone 214-924-0408

or email [noel.tardy@yahoo.com](mailto:noel.tardy@yahoo.com)

### **Kiwi Ukulele**

New Zealand's Ukulele Companion

<http://www.kiwiukulele.co.nz/>

### **Bounty Music**

<http://www.ukes.com/>

Bounty Music Maui

111 Hana Hwy. #105

Kahului, Maui, HI 96732

open 9 :00 to 6:00 Monday thru Saturday \* Sunday 10:00 to 4:00

Phone: (808) 871-1141

Fax: (808) 871-1138

### **Mobius Strap**

[www.mobiusstrap.com](http://www.mobiusstrap.com)

# Online Resources

<http://www.tikiking.com>

[tikiking@tikiking.com](mailto:tikiking@tikiking.com)

comment=Website listing:

Home of Tiki King Ukuleles since 1999. lots of neat Ukulele stuff, such as the webs largest Ukulele makers database, Custom Hand Built Tiki King Ukuleles, and ukulele stuff to see and buy. We have Flukes and Fleas, Ukulele Art Gallery, Ukulele classes, chord charts, CD's and more!

## **Bonsai Garden Orchestra**

email: [info@bgo.nu](mailto:info@bgo.nu)

Webside: <http://www.bgo.nu>

MySpace: <http://www.myspace.com/bonsaigardenorchestra>

World Music Festival "glattundverkehrt" on july 22nd .

[www.glattundverkehrt.at](http://www.glattundverkehrt.at)

## **UkePics**

Assorted Ukulele Picture Exposé

<http://www.ukepics.com/>

## **How High The Moon Publishing**

Publisher of the Jam Book "Play Well with Other"

9826 James A. Reed Rd. Kansas City, MO 64134

816-965-0183 or 816-728-6936

<http://www.moonbookstore.com>

## **GoChords**

<http://www.gochords.com>

"GoChords™ is an easy-to-use writing and playing tool with moveable chord tablature!"

## **Live 'Ukulele**

Tabs, lessons, and info for 'ukulele enthusiasts

<http://liveukulele.com/>

<http://www.gotaukulele.com>

<http://ukulele-perspective.com>

<http://ukeofcarl.com/> - lots of free tabs and video.

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/418162731550808/>  
(Keep Ukulele Playing Live"